

Matter of Fact

After Ike, The Deluge

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AS EXPECTED, the Soviets have triumphantly fired another moonshot. The Pentagon response was automatic. One of the Administration experts in the manufacture of soothing syrup, Dr. Herbert York, hastened to announce that this country and the Soviet Union were still "essentially in the same position" in the development of ballistic missiles.

It is probably useless to say so, yet it should be noted for record that Dr. York's statement is an offense against public decency at least if you believe that public decency requires officials to give the public a reasonably accurate picture of the national situation. Here is the best official forecast of what Dr. York means by "essentially the same position" in the true years of the missile gap, which lie just ahead:

1960 U. S. 30 ICBMs	versus U. S. S. R. 100 ICBMs
1961 U. S. 70 ICBMs	versus U. S. S. R. 300 ICBMs
1962 U. S. 130 ICBMs	versus U. S. S. R. 1000 ICBMs
1963 U. S. 130 ICBMs	versus U. S. S. R. 1500 ICBMs

The foregoing table contrasts the official U. S. estimates, the "national estimates," of Soviet missile capability with the missile program presented to the last Congress by the Eisenhower Administration. Over bitter protests from the Administration, the Congress provided 60 additional Atlas missiles in 1962, and the same in 1963. The Congress also insisted on stepping up the time schedule for the solid-fueled Minuteman ICBM in

order to get the first of these missiles in 1963.

THERE IS a simple reason why the original administration program is given above, instead of the somewhat better program voted by Congress. Funds to finance the added ICBM production will have to be provided in the election year budget; the signs suggest that the administration will follow its usual budget-first rule, overriding Congress and cutting back missile output to its original program.

Even if Congress is not overridden, moreover, the Soviet superiority in long range missile power will still be very great for a long period. The critical period will extend from 1961 until about 1968, when we shall begin to have a serious striking force in the Minuteman missile.

To these grim facts there is more to add. In brief, besides the old missile testing base at Kapustin Yar in the bend of the Volga, the Soviets have now established a new base to the north of the Aral Sea. From the new base this summer, two full range ICBM shots were fired to impact in the Pacific. This is a departure from the Soviet practice of testing their ICBMs with such heavy instrumentation aboard that they impact after a flight of only 3500 miles. The shot this summer knocked out the complacent argument of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Nathan Twining, that the Soviets probably did not have ICBMs capable of going the full intercontinental range.

In these circumstances, powerful influences in the Pentagon are actually launching a campaign to write down the intelligence estimates once again. The pretext is the relative smallness of the Soviet ICBM testing program

—only about 20 Soviet ICBMs have been fired in all. The real aim, of course, is to cut ICBM appropriations, in order to make room for Army and Navy spending of other types. Fortunately, the CIA director, Allen W. Dulles, seems likely to resist this new exercise in self-delusion.

IT IS self-deluding, in any case, to use the national intelligence estimates as we are now using them. They are not and cannot be sacred and absolute measures of Soviet performance. The estimating machinery has certainly been much improved in the last couple of years. CIA Director Dulles and his staff have worked endlessly to eliminate the defects that produced the often-repeated former errors on the optimistic side. Yet it is admitted by the estimators themselves that they have almost no protection against a Soviet deception plan. They are especially vulnerable as a branch of the intelligence community to a deception plan which is based on underground Soviet ICBM production. The estimate that the Soviet Union has a critical situation will be lost.

The Soviet interest in such a deception plan is obvious. Even if there is no such deception plan, and even if Congress is not overridden by budget-cut passions, the missile gap is due to be very serious indeed in the years from 1961 through 1965 or 1968. On this point, the figures speak for themselves. It is also necessary to remember the extraordinary arrogance Nikita S. Khrushchev has so often shown in the last 18 months.

If this is how Khrushchev behaves now, how will he behave when the U. S.-U. S. S. R. long-range missile ratio is 10 to 1 in favor of the Kremlin? Apparently the Administration's answer to this question is: "After Ike, the deluge!"

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